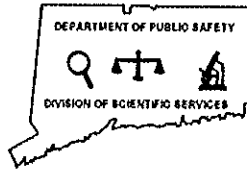


STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

John A. Danaher III
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

March 19, 2010

Rep. James F. Spallone, Co-Chairman
Sen. Gayle S. Slosberg, Co-Chairman
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

HB 5515 AN ACT CONCERNING GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY THROUGH REGIONALIZATION IN CONNECTICUT

The Department of Public Safety opposes Section 5 (c) (6) of this bill.

This proposed bill would change fundamentally the way we govern ourselves in the State of Connecticut. While the theory of "regionalization" and the promotion of government efficiency are topics worth exploring, the suggestion of transferring the "functions" of the Division of State Police to six different governance regions would have a harmful effect on public safety in Connecticut and would be highly likely to result in increased costs and fewer services.

The following language in the bill would purport to transfer the "functions" of the Department of Public Safety's Division of State Police to six different regional councils:

"Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, any regulation adopted pursuant to said statutes and any provision of any special or public act, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall implement a transition of services and functions described in subsections (c) and (d) of this section to the regional councils.

(c) . . . the functions of the following departments and agencies, . . .

(6) The Division of State Police of the Department of Public Safety;"

To say the least, this proposal raises a myriad of questions and concerns. As a preliminary matter, it should be noted that the Department of Public Safety and its Division of State Police carry out a number of statewide functions, the continuing viability of which would be thrown into question by passage of this bill.

Some of the sworn members of the Connecticut State Police also serve in the other two divisions of the Department of Public safety, working in the Division of Scientific Services in areas such as the investigation of computer crimes (most often, these are cases in which children are the victims) and in the Division of Fire, Emergency and Building Services, where troopers investigate arson and work in specialized oversight areas. Personnel from the Connecticut State Police have also been assigned to the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. There are a number of statewide functions of the Connecticut State Police that cannot be simply transferred and split up six ways.

Let us consider some of these:

1. **Communications.** The State of Connecticut has invested millions of dollars in a statewide radio communication system that is state of the art. The design, implementation and maintenance of this system have all been specifically premised on statewide application. There would be very legitimate questions posed as to why the state spent millions of dollars to create a statewide communications system and then split the state police into six regions governed by six different entities.
2. **Criminal History, State and Federal.** The Connecticut State Police are the approved State of Connecticut point of contact for access to the federal FBI database for criminal history checks. This is of obvious importance for criminal justice purposes, but also of increasing importance for non-criminal justice purposes, such as the General Assembly requirements that the State Police conduct background checks for numerous occupations that are sensitive in that they care for children, the elderly or other vulnerable groups. Who will be the point of contact for the FBI (which requires a single state point of contact) and who will conduct these background checks?
3. **Statewide Criminal Investigations.** The State Police have an outstanding history of excellence in combating and solving major crimes in areas in which even the largest municipalities lack the necessary expertise. Consider some of the recent murder investigations the State Police have conducted. Who will carry out this function if there is to be a six-way split of the State Police?
4. **Arson, Car Theft, Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, Criminal Intelligence, and Firearms Trafficking.** These are all areas in which state resources must keep up with, and get ahead of, the criminals. Statewide task forces, and the specialized expertise they have developed over many years of experience, keep Connecticut safe. If there are six different regions, will any one of them have the needed expertise or resources to fight these types of crimes?
5. **Licensing.** Connecticut has a single permit system for handguns which provides significant public safety value. Who will be responsible for the issuance and revocation of gun permits, and the licensing of security guards, private detectives and bail bondsmen if the State Police are divided among six regions?
6. **Sex Offender Registry.** Connecticut has a state of the art sex offender registry. Who will maintain this registry?
7. **Statewide Disaster Prevention and Response.** While the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security plans for emergencies, disasters and how the state will respond to them, that Department has no field personnel. The Department

of Public Safety has developed comprehensive disaster safety plans involving major highway closures, civil disturbances, prison riots, and mass evacuations that require the coordination and utilization of all agency personnel to ensure the safety of all state citizens. Who will be the state's police force in time of disaster or emergency? Who will carry out the carefully developed plans?

In addition to the critical question of who would carry out the multiple, existing statewide functions of the Connecticut State Police, there are any number of procedural questions raised by this bill, some of which are:

1. **Infrastructure.** Outdated as much of it is, the Connecticut State Police Department at least has an infrastructure. Will this infrastructure be transferred along with the "functions"? Most of it was built in early part of last century and will need replacing. While the regionals are given authority to tax, will they have any authority to bond? Who will pay for the infrastructure?
2. **State-Local Interactions.** The Connecticut State Police are the police force for the State of Connecticut. Our cities and a number of our municipalities have their own departments. State and local police have an excellent history of working together, with the State Police providing assistance in areas such as major crime investigation and in other critical situations. In those regions that have organized police departments, how will the regional councils reconcile taking over the municipal departments and also the functions of the State Police?
3. **Collective Bargaining.** How will this transfer of functions take place in conformity with the existing and future contractual obligations of collective bargaining agreements?
4. **Selections.** Part of the excellence of the Connecticut State Police is reflected in the selections process, where over 4,000 individuals recently applied to become Troopers with the Connecticut State Police. Selecting the 75 very best of those applicants for the next recruit class is a complex process that, over the years, has contributed heavily to the excellence of the Department. Who will operate the selections process? What effect will this regional structure have on that process?
5. **Assignment.** The number of personnel assigned to any given region at a particular point in time is constantly in flux. The needs of the agency and the developing expertise of the individual troopers generate a constantly changing pattern with upward mobility that is in everyone's best interest, particularly the public safety of the citizens of Connecticut. If the State Police functions are transferred to regions, that transfer will be based upon a picture of a moment in time (the effective date of the act) as to who is assigned to towns in that region. Is that good planning? Is it in the interest of public safety?

These numerous questions address the bill itself. While there may have been efficiencies lost when county government was abolished in Connecticut, public safety was never a county function. Since 1903 the Connecticut State Police have been the best such department in the nation. The existing structure meets both statewide needs and local needs.

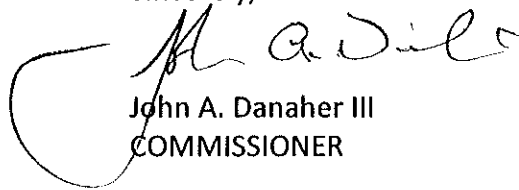
The Connecticut State Police currently operate with three districts, eastern, western and central, and there are twelve troops divided among those three districts. The state police are the only police department for 81 towns. Fifty six of those towns have elected to participate

in a unique and highly successful resident state trooper program that provides enhanced services at additional cost to the towns (but at a higher efficiency in that it is not nearly as expensive as it would be if those towns had their own departments).

The existing structure has generated a history of excellence. It responds flexibly to continuing and changing statewide public safety needs, compliance with federal requirements and an extraordinary ability to meet local needs. The argument is simply "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

While regionalization may make sense and achieve efficiencies in areas such as education, it makes no sense to split the Connecticut State Police among six different regions. While the intention might be to reduce the cost of police/law enforcement services, the unintended consequences will bring about the opposite result. The "six regional agencies" will require their own administration and management support that will actually cost more, while not providing the quality and necessary diversity of existing public safety services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Danaher III", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

John A. Danaher III
COMMISSIONER